

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 EUR-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-01 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, NI, JA

SUBJECT: VISIT OF JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER KIMURA TO NIGERIA

SUMMARY: JAPANESE FONMIN KIMURA MADE HASTILY ARRANGED THREE-DAY TRIP (NOV. 1-3) TO NIGERIA IN COURSE OF WHICH HE HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH GOWON AND ARIKPO ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AND BILATERAL MATTERS. END SUMMARY.

1. JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER KIMURA PAID THREE-DAY VISIT TO NIGERIA DURING WHICH HE CALLED ON GOWON AND COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ARIKPO. ACCORDING FMG PRESS RELEASE, GOWON DESCRIBED AS ENCOURAGING JAPAN'S NEW APPROACH TO AFRICAN AFFAIRS AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT JAPAN WOULD USE HER INFLUENCE WITH SOUTH AFRICA TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. COMMENTING ON PROPOSED NIGERIAN 3RD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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PLAN, KIMURA SAID HE WAS HIGHLY IMPRESSED AND LOOKED FORWARD TO

FRUITFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN HIS COUNTRY AND NIGERIA.

2. AT PREDEPARTURE AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 3, KIMURA SAID HE HAD HELD FRANK DISCUSSIONS WITH NIGERIAN LEADERS FOCUSING ON BILATERAL RELATIONS AND SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE SAID IT WOULD NOT BE PRACTICABLE TO PUT AN END TO JAPANESE TRADE RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA BUT PROMISED GRADUAL REDUCTION AND HE ANNOUNCED HIS COUNTRY'S INTENTION TO IMPORT MORE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS FROM INDEPENDENT BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING NIGERIA. KIMURA ALSO DISCLOSED THAT GOWON AND HIS WIFE HAD ACCEPTED GOJ INVITATION FOR STATE VISIT TO JAPAN WITH DATE TO BE SET LATER.

3. JAPANESE AMBASSADOR AND SENIOR MEA OFFICIAL TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT KIMURA HAD PLANNED GO DIRECTLY FROM GHANA TO ZAIRE, BYPASSING NIGERIA, DUE TO LIMITATIONS OF TIME AND DIFFICULTIES IN ARRANGING APPOINTMENTS. TRIP WAS ARRANGED AT LAST MINUTE AS RESULT DIRECT INTERVENTION BY MEA PERMSEC WHO TOLD JAPANESE AMBASSADOR VISIT TO AFRICA THAT DID NOT INCLUDE NIGERIA WOULD BE "UNTHINKABLE."

4. JAPANESE AMBASSADOR ALSO SAID THAT "DISCUSSIONS WERE CORDIAL BUT NOT ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY" BUT DID NOT ELABORATE AND NOTED FMG STRESSED THROUGHOUT TALKS PRESENT TRADE IMBALANCE BETWEEN COUNTRIES. HE FURTHER EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT, ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES, KIMURA MAY HAVE BEEN MISLED BY ARIKPO-GOWON POLITENESS AND NOT REALIZED INTENSITY OF FEELINGS DESPITE ATTEMPTS TO CORRECT THIS IMPRESSION.

5. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, JAPANESE EMBOFF MADE SIMILAR POINTS AND ADDED THAT IMBALANCE IN TRADE WAS IN FMG'S FAVOR ACCORDING TO JAPANESE STATISTICS. FMG, HE SAID, WANTED DIVERSIFICATION OF JAPANESE IMPORTS FROM NIGERIA WHICH CURRENTLY CONSIST PRIMARILY OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS. HE ALSO SAID GOJ WAS PREPARED TO ACQUIESCE TO THIS DESIRE NOT ONLY IN NIGERIA BUT IN AFRICA IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE ITS DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTS FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

6. COMMENT: DESCRIPTION OF TALKS AS NOT BEING ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY WOULD APPEAR TO STEM FROM INABILITY OF KIMURA TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GET FROM FMG COMMITMENT FOR JAPANESE PARTICIPATION IN LARGE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ENVISAGED IN 3RD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. NEVERTHELESS, TRIP SERVED APPARENT MAIN PURPOSE OF EXPLAINING GOJ POLICIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES TO JAPANESE DEPENDENCE ON SOUTH AFRICA FOR CERTAIN PRODUCTS.

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